

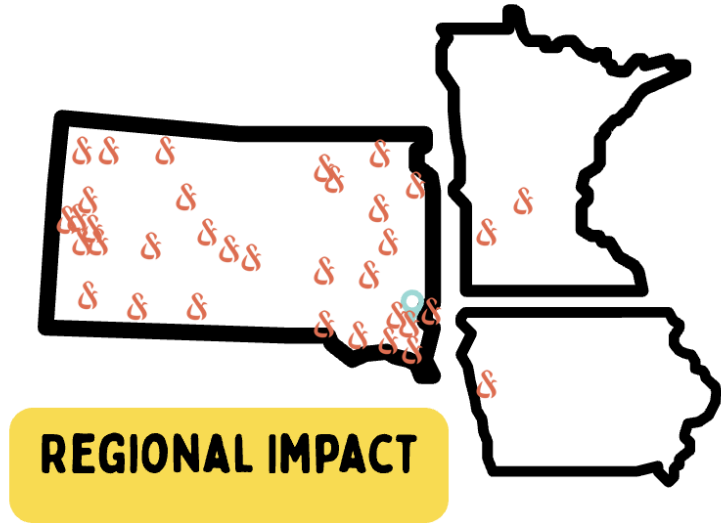
Addressing Mental Health & Student Success: The Power of Peers

Whitney Bischoff, Student Programs Manager

LOST & FOUND[®]

LOST & FOUND[®]

**Lost&Found delivers
comprehensive, data-driven,
and resilience-focused suicide
prevention and postvention
programs and services for youth
and young adults (ages 10-34)
and their support networks.**



Objectives

1. Understand mental health as a contributor to student success & retention;
2. Introduce resilience-based prevention model;
3. Discuss a peer mentorship model designed to support campus staff and provide holistic skill building on college campuses;
4. Brainstorm how to integrate peers and resilience programming to improve campus climate

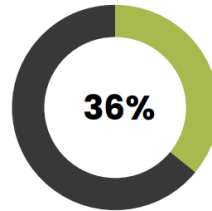


**What are the most pressing
mental health concerns for
college students?**

Common Concerns

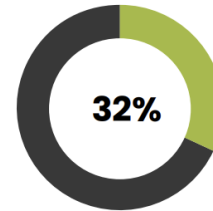
COLLEGE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

During the past 30 days **how often did you feel...**



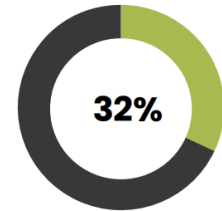
36%

That everything
was an effort



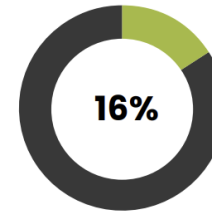
32%

Nervous



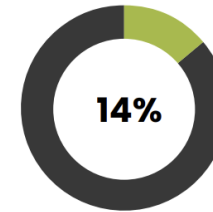
32%

Restless or fidgety



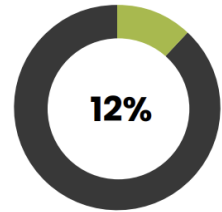
16%

Hopeless



14%

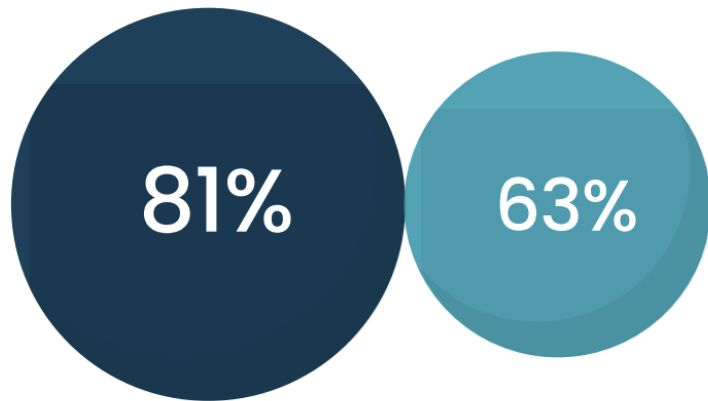
Worthless



12%

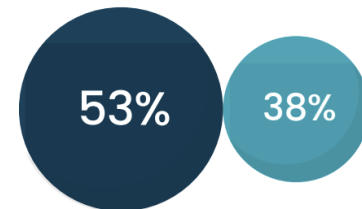
So sad that
nothing could
cheer you up

Mental Health on College Campuses

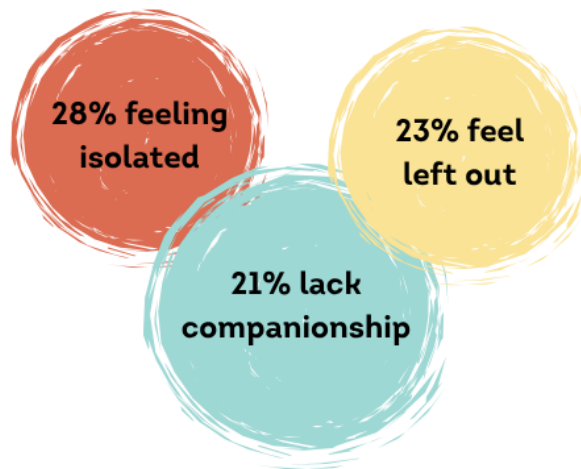


Believe students at their college or university feel that mental health impacts their campus community

● Four-year
● Two-year

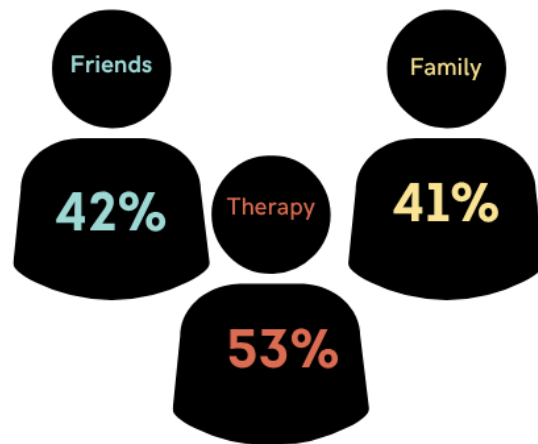


Believe students at their college or university work together to improve student mental health



FEELINGS OF ISOLATION

SEEKING SUPPORT



Mental Health Values



**OF YOUTH AGREE
WITH THE STATEMENT**

"I want to support my friends,
but I don't know how."

COLLEGE STUDENTS' VALUE & PRIORITIZATION OF MENTAL HEALTH



63%

Having good
mental health



54%

Taking care of
their mental health



52%

Concerned about
their friends'
mental health



39%

Concerned about
the mental health
of their peers

Impact

Where do we go from here?



- Counseling Offices - TIRED
- Support Staff expected to fill the gaps – FRUSTRATED
- Retention (National Student Clearinghouse) – 68.2%
 - Older students (does not exceed 50%)
 - Students of Color
 - Hispanic – 63.6%
 - Black – 56.6%
 - Native American – 52.8%

Impact

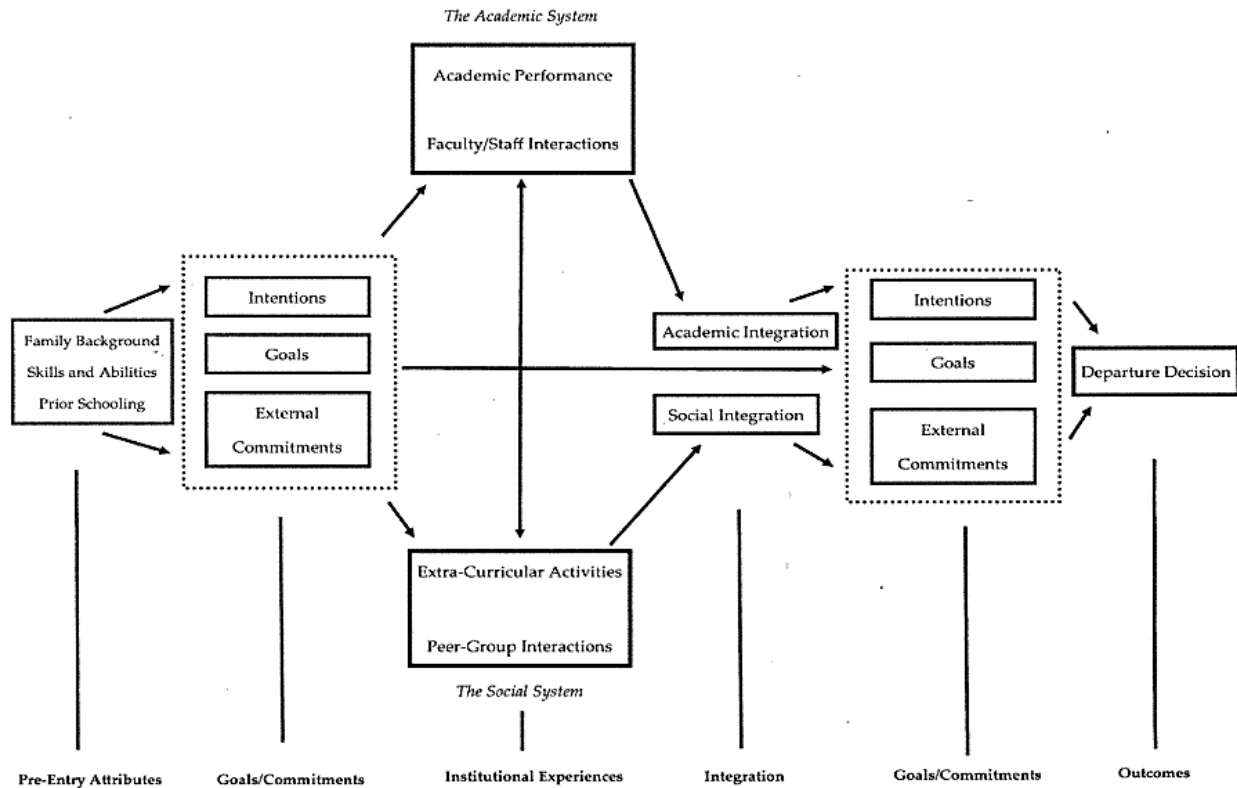
Where do we go from here?



What is in our control to fix?



Mental Health & Student Success



A Conceptual Schema for dropout from College, (Tinto, 1993)—Pulled from Cornelia Connolly (2016)

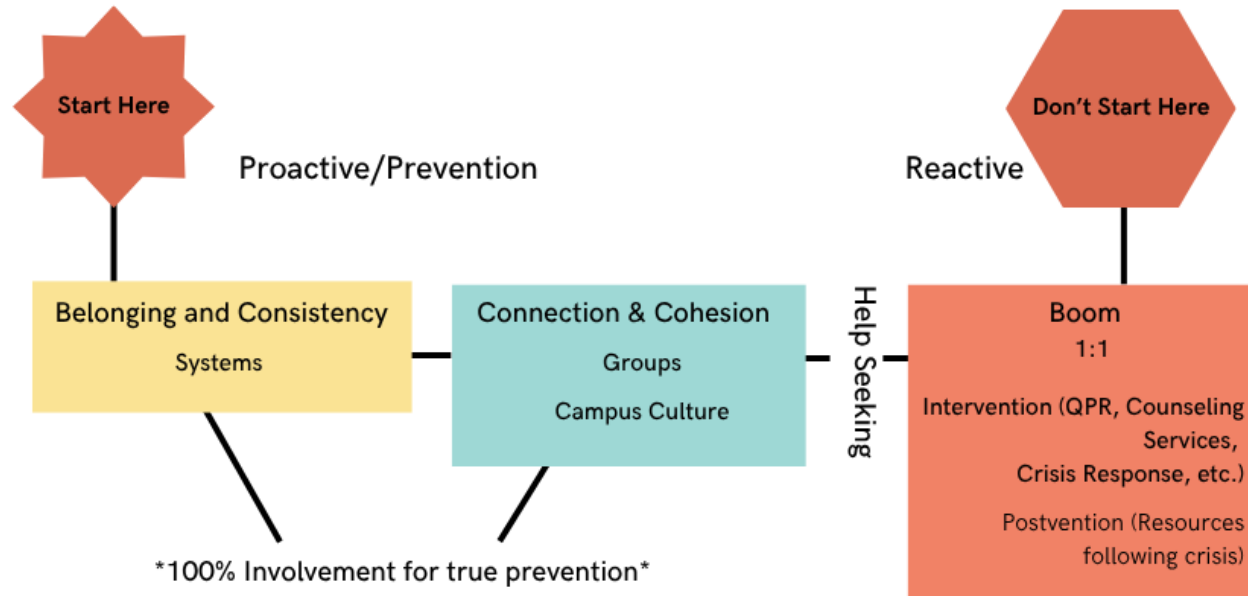
Campus Climate – Holistic Support & Success

Why is viewing mental wellness in connection to campus climate important?



The background is a solid blue color. It is decorated with several chevron arrows of different colors and sizes: a dark blue arrow in the top left, a yellow arrow in the top left, a purple arrow in the top right, a grey arrow in the middle right, a yellow arrow in the bottom right, and three grey arrows in the bottom left. A large white circle is positioned at the bottom center, partially cut off by the bottom edge of the image.

Proactive Resilience Building



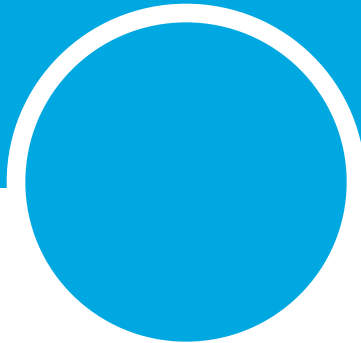
What peer mentor programs currently exist?

What are the goals of these programs?



LOST & FOUND[®]

Peer2Peer Program



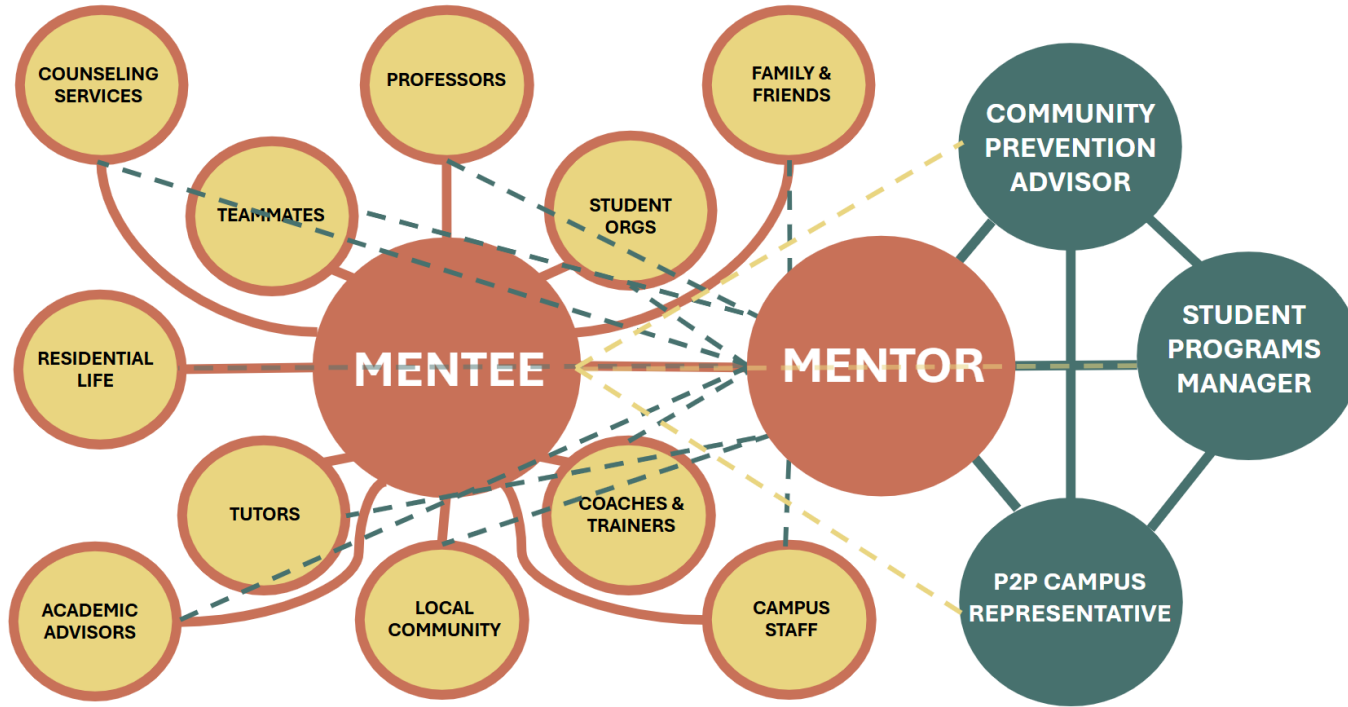
Peer2Peer Programming

Helping students build resilience

- Volunteer Involvement
- Recruitment – Student Led
 - Building Connection/Establishing Campus Relationships
 - Referrals from student support offices
- Focused on building resilience skills & connection
- Strengths-Based
- Meeting needs of mentee – goal focused
- Non-Clinical Level Support



Network of Support



Peer2Peer Mentors

Helping students build resilience and Find connection

- Tiered support – mentee to mentor and mentor to staff
- Mentor Training
 - Mental Health Foundations
 - Active Listening
 - Building Connections
 - Boundaries and Self Care
 - QPR
- Expectations of Support from Employers
- Resume boost

CONNECTION

- ☐ I talk to others – coworkers, friends, family, neighbors, or classmates – often (multiple times per day).
- ☐ I visit and chat with friends regularly (once or more per week).
- ☐ I connect with my family/loved ones often (once or more per week).
- ☐ I feel connected to my local community and/or campus life.

MEANING

- ☐ I feel fulfilled with my life and look forward to my future.
- ☐ I feel as if my life has purpose, and I take actions to give it purpose.
- ☐ I feel connected to my faith, higher power, or force that gives me purpose.
- ☐ I could write down 5 long-term goals for myself at this moment.

HEALTHY THINKING

- ☐ I talk to myself the way I talk to others (with positivity, grace, and compassion).
- ☐ I accept who I am, and I embrace my flaws.
- ☐ I think positively about myself, my characteristics, and my values.
- ☐ I feel positive about my life and the steps I am taking daily to grow.

WELLNESS

- ☐ I drink at least 64 ounces of water (approximately 8 cups) each day.
- ☐ I eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each and every day.
- ☐ I exercise or get some type of movement at least 5 times a week.
- ☐ I feel financially stable or have a plan to become financially stable.



UNITED WAY
of the Black Hills

Thrive

Confidence



Connection



Safety



Physical needs

Campus Sizes & Types for Consideration



Large 4-year

Small 4-year

2-year

Extensions/Cohorts

Peer2Peer Outcomes

Best Practices Registry for Suicide Prevention Programs

- Sample – 107 students
 - 72 mentors; 35 mentees
- Recommendations for future programming
 - Expand Outreach (verbiage/marketing)
 - Campus Partnership
 - Enhanced Mentor Training
 - Conversation Guides
 - Community-Building Events (integrate into chapters)
 - Support year-round

Key Outcomes Metric

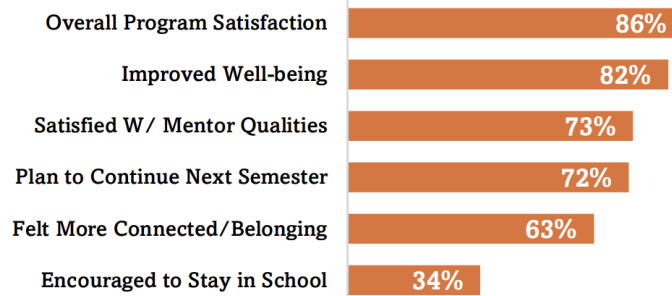


Figure: Key outcome metrics – percentage of students reporting positive responses on each measure.

Mentee Impact

- I liked the ability to **talk to another student**. I don't have many friends here so it was nice.
- I enjoyed the opportunity I got **to make a new friend** while **gaining mental health experience**.
- The **community** that we get to be a part of has been the best part.
- Being able to talk to another student about **how I am feeling about school and life**.
- So far, I like meeting with my mentor and discussing what I expect from this program and how I am able to meet my **personal goals**. I **want to become a mentor** for someone eventually, so this is great experience for me.



Mentor Impact

- Just getting to reach out is my favorite part. I really have the desire to help but struggle to just get out there. Peer2Peer **has given me an outlet to help people where I don't feel shy about it.**
- Feeling like I am **making a difference** in someone's life and **getting to know new people**
- Knowing that I am helping someone else **feel better by simply listening** about any challenges or stressors they are facing. Even if I don't feel like I did much to help, **my mentee has told me she feels better after talking to me.**
- I really enjoyed **creating a connection** with my mentee and seeing how that connection has grown! I also have enjoyed seeing how I have **grown personally!**
- My favorite thing about the Peer2Peer mentoring program is that the **staff** is so ready and **willing to check in and answer any and all questions** that I have. **I never feel as if I am alone** in the program and that is awesome.



How did the program help with students decision to stay in school?

- It made me more **motivated** to be there for my mentee.
- It has helped me to want to reach **my dreams**
- It helped me to **have a purpose** to stay in school, by helping others. And has given me a leadership position to help my **professional growth**.
- **Dealing with stress, anxiety, and depression** Because I kind of getting to know this school better
- This program helped me **not overthink** about school too much and know that i will experience struggles, but **it will get better**
- It makes it fun and gives me something to **look forward to**
- When I make big decisions, I **don't back out** of them.
- Showed me that **help is out there**
- Made me **more comfortable** around campus
- Helped me to **stay motivated** and be **less stressed** about school.
- It has given me the **support** I need to want to continue college
- This programs encourage to stay in school because is something that no one around me is involved in. It allows me to **grow as a person** and being a person that someone can talk to.

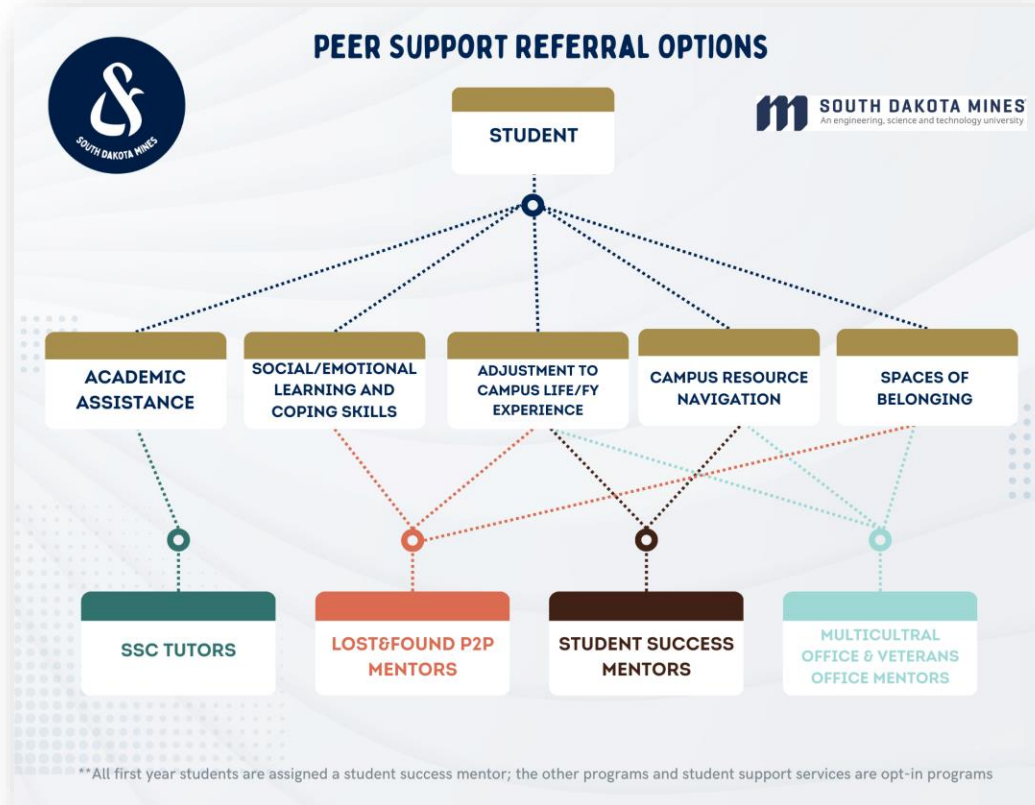
Practical Elements for Implementation

Small Group Discussion

- Are there spaces on campus that would support mental health programming focused on the Peer2Peer model?
- Are there barriers to implementing a support system/program like Peer2Peer? Added to existing programming?
- How can the ripple impact be seen with student-lead mental health efforts?
- Is it feasible to ask current staff to implement programming like Peer2Peer or are there benefits for outside organizations to implement and support this programming?
- Would a program like Peer2Peer impact campus climate/systems and if not, why?



Integrated into Campus Systems



Campus Hub



Questions?

Thank You!

Whitney Bischoff
wbischoff@resilienttoday.org
Student Programs Manager
www.resilienttoday.org

LOST & FOUND[®]



All material in this presentation, including text and images, is the property of RNL. Permission is required to reproduce information.



The 39th Annual National Higher Education Conference

Sources

https://healthymindsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HMS_National-Report-2022-2023_full.pdf

[Report: Addressing loneliness on college campuses\)](#)

[go.timelycare.com/l/916941/2024-05-](https://go.timelycare.com/l/916941/2024-05-17/t52m2/916941/1715969310elvUsRm1/Report_Call_For_Campus_Action_AM_TC.pdf)

[17/t52m2/916941/1715969310elvUsRm1/Report_Call_For_Campus_Action_AM_TC.pdf](https://go.timelycare.com/l/916941/1715969310elvUsRm1/Report_Call_For_Campus_Action_AM_TC.pdf)

[Persistence & Retention | National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#)